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Mary and the Church

Rev. Donal Flanagan, D.D.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Our present author is an Irish theologian who has written a doctoral thesis (unpublished) on the evidence from tradition on Mary as spouse of Christ. (Faculty of Theology, Maynooth, Ireland, 1957). The following article, published in the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* (Vol. XC, pp. 231-245) during 1958, is part of the author's thesis, a provocative treatment of the difficult question of Mary's relation to Christ and to the Church. He claims that "we appear to have lost or to have allowed to grow obscured the rooted patristic and later conception of Mary and the Church as related, as subjects of interchangeable predication, as similar mysteries."

At the present time, Father Flanagan is teaching at St. Joseph's College, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway, Ireland.

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CHANGE OF NAME

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Mary and the Church

By REV. DONAL FLANAGAN, D.D.

FROM an examination of Christian writers down the centuries there emerges the striking fact that over and over again the same titles are given to Mary and to the Church.¹ The same biblical symbols, the same biblical personages are taken by the Fathers and by later authors to represent now Mary, now the Church. To enumerate but a few. Both are referred to as 'the garden of Paradise,'² as the Woman who is the enemy of the Serpent,³ as the Bride of Christ,⁴ as 'the great sign' of *Apocalypse* chapter xii, the Woman clothed with the sun,⁵ as Eve,⁶ as Virgin Mother.⁷

I—THE CHURCH, OUR VIRGIN MOTHER

The Church our Mother is an idea which has always been familiar to Christians. From the third century come the words of St. Cyprian who expressed it: 'So that one may have God for his Father, let him have the Church

¹ de Lubac, *Splendour of the Church*, p. 240 f.

² Origen, *In Cant. Cant.*, i, 3. *Ecclesia Christi quae est paradusum deliciarum*: cf. St. John Damasc. *Hom. in dorm. B.M.V.* 2 novi Adam rationalem paradusum (Mary).

³ See Gen. iii, 15. Barre in *Bulletin de la Société Française d'Études Mariologiques*, 1951, p. 115 and note 517. MS. refs. Anon. circ. 1150. '*Inimicitias ponam inter te et mulierem.*' Hoc quidam referunt ad ecclesiam, verius vero ad beatam virginem.

⁴ Church. After St. Paul, *Eph.* v, 25 f. Ego autem dico in Christo et Ecclesia the whole patristic tradition: cf. Mary. A line of writers in tradition including: St. Peter Chrysologus PL 52.576; Paschasius Radbertus PL 120. 103-4; Aelred Rievallensis PL 195.253 and others. Evidence from tradition on Mary as spouse of Christ may be found in a doctoral thesis on this subject (unpublished) presented to the Faculty of Theology, Maynooth, 1957, by the present writer.

⁵ See le Frois, S.V.D., *The Woman Clothed with the Sun* (Orbis Catholicus), Rome, 1954. Among those who interpret the Woman as the Church, he cites Hippolytus, Methodius, Jerome, Augustine, Gregory the Great, Bede; among those who interpret the Woman as Mary, Ignatius of Antioch, Clement of Alexandria, Ephrem, Epiphanius, Cassiodorus, Ambrose Autpert, Alcuin.

⁶ Church. Zeno of Verona, PL 11.352; Jerome, PL 23.372; Augustine, PL 36.461; Mary. Irenaeus, *Dem. Pred. Apost.* tr. Weibert 5; Zeno of Verona, PL 11.278.

⁷ Church. Augustine, PL 40.399; Clement Alex., PG 8.300 f; et passim.

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for his Mother.'¹ Tertullian calls her : 'True Mother of the living . . . the Church.'² Ambrose and Augustine speak in the same terms.³ The Church as Mother of Christians was a widespread patristic conception. The Fathers, however, make clear that this Church who is our Mother is a virgin-mother. This insistence that the Church who is our Mother is a virgin is found in tradition at a very early date and is of constant recurrence.⁴

Augustine explains what is meant by the virginity of the Church when he writes :

"Mary brought to birth your Head, and it is the Church which brings you to birth. For she too is at once virgin and mother, mother by her tender love, *virgin by her incorrupt faith*.'⁵

The virginity of the Church consists, not in the possession of bodily integrity, but in that spiritual integrity which is given by the possession of the true faith.

St. Paul had already sown the seed from which this doctrine was to evolve when he wrote to the Christians at Corinth to whom he had preached the truth of the Gospel, 'I have espoused you to one man to present you a chaste virgin to Christ.'⁶ He was not, however, originating a new figure, for already in the Old Testament infidelity had many times been stigmatized by the God of Israel as adultery, as fornication. Paul was merely turning the obverse side of the coin. It was a very natural development that virginity should be chosen as the figure to express the Church's incorruptible possession of the true faith. It was in line with the Old Testament usage that she should be called, in contrast with the faithless

¹ Cyprian, *Ep.* 74, No. 7.

² Tert., *de Anima*, Ch. 43.

³ Ambrose, PL 15.1585; Augustine, PL 38.1380 et passim. For a fuller account of the idea of the Church as Mother in the patristic period, see J. C. Plumpe, *Mater Ecclesia*, C.U.A., Washington, 1948.

⁴ See Müller, *Maria-Ecclesia. Die Einheit Marias und der Kirche*. Freiburg (Schweiz). 1955. 2 Aufl. where much evidence from both eastern and western Fathers is set out.

⁵ Augustine, *Sermons* (ed. Morin), Rome, 1930, p. 163.

⁶ 2 Cor., xi, 2.

spouse Israel who went after false gods, the Virgin Spouse, the Virgin Church.

The Fathers loved to speak of the virginal motherhood of the Church, because they saw it as the counterpart of the doctrine of our solidarity with Christ, our Head. 'Christ is born of a virgin-mother according to the flesh and becomes our Head. We are born of a virgin-mother according to the spirit and become His members,' writes St. Augustine.¹ Clement of Alexandria, under the influence of the same doctrine of our supernatural oneness with Christ, can go so far as to say : 'There is only one virgin mother. I love to call her the Church.'² Augustine suggests further that not alone may our new birth to grace be compared to Christ's birth from Mary, but that in some mysterious way Christ's birth from Mary is a pattern of our birth from the Church. Christ was born of a virgin that He might show that we, His members, were to be spiritually born of a virgin.³ Even without these explicit allusions to Mary the thought implied in calling the Church our Virgin Mother is clear. The patristic presentation of the Church as our Virgin Mother has very clear Marian overtones.

II—EVE. THE CHURCH

Perhaps the most familiar datum of patristic mariology is the doctrine of Mary as the restoration of Eve. The names of Irenaeus and Justin Martyr are well known as the earliest patristic exponents of this teaching. Mary, however, is not the only Eve about whom the Fathers speak, for in the patristic period we find widespread allusions to the Church in this role of another Eve, the restoration of Eve who fell. Eve the spouse of Adam from whose side she was taken is seen by the Fathers as

¹ PL. 40.399.

² P.G. 8.300 f.

³ PL. 40.399. *Oportetbat enim caput nostrum propter insigne miraculum secundum carnem nasci de virgine quo significaret membra sua de virgine ecclesia secundum spiritum nascitura.*

prefiguring the Church born from the side of Christ. St. Jerome writes of 'Eve who as a type of the Church was created from the rib of her husband,'¹ and Augustine speaks of the Church as Eve in contradistinction to Christ who is Adam. His words :

'Adam slept when from his side Eve was created. Adam was an image of Christ, Eve of the Church.'²

At the back of these patristic statements stands a master-idea of patristic thought on the redemption, that the work of Christ is a restoration of the creation that fell, carried out in the very pattern of that original creation. This deeply-rooted idea sees the remaking of Adam in Christ as paralleled by the remaking of Eve in the Church. The new creation follows the lines of the old. As Adam's companion and helpmate, Eve was made from his side as he slept, so the Church, the companion and helpmate of the new Adam, Christ, is made from his side as he sleeps the sleep of death on the Cross. This manner of restoration is a sort of guarantee of the absoluteness of the restoration effected by Christ. As Zeno of Verona writes :

'Lest the beginning should not appear to be restored absolutely, the first man dies on the Cross and when he is asleep . . . from his side pierced by the lance the spiritual body of the spiritual woman comes, so that Adam rightly is restored through Christ, Eve through the Church.'³

It is hardly necessary to cite evidence on the patristic conception of Mary as the restoration of Eve. It is impossible, however, to pass without comment on the striking parallelism of phrase evident when the author

¹ PL. 23.372. Taceo de Eva, quae in typo ecclesiae de costa viri aedificata.'

² PL. 36.461. Adam dormivit quando de latere ejus Eve facta est.' Adam in figura Christi, Eva in figura ecclesiae.

³ PL. 11.352. Ac ne non ex integro principium suo statui redditum videretur prior vir consummatur in cruce; atque eo feliciter soporato, similiter de ejus latere ictu lanceae spiritale corpus spiritualis feminae ut *legitime* Adam per Christum, Eva per ecclesiam renovaretur.

just quoted, Zeno of Verona, writes now of *Mary* as the restoration of Eve. His words are :

‘Love . . . you have restored Eve in Mary, you have renewed Adam in Christ.’¹

Irenaeus, the greatest Marian theologian of the early patristic period, had written earlier :

‘It was necessary and right to make Adam again in Christ and Eve in Mary.’²

It appears, therefore, that when the Fathers considered the new creation as a re-creation in the pattern of the old, they, following St. Paul, saw Christ as the new Adam. It is equally certain that for them Eve was fulfilled or restored in Mary and the Church. Eve is the figure, not of Mary alone, nor of the Church alone, but of Mary and the Church. Mary and the Church have thus a common biblical precursor in the Old Testament who foreshadows them both in her person. This certainly appears to argue to some inter-relation of Mary and the Church.

III—MARY, BRIDE OF CHRIST

The designation of Mary as bride of Christ shows us Mary spoken of in terms of the Church. It is clear from the evolution and use of this title for Mary in tradition that it was from the Church that it was transferred to Mary. The history of the Marian exegesis of the Cantic of Canticles affords proof of this. Its first great exponent, Rupert of Deutz, justifies it on the grounds ‘that nothing is unfittingly applied to her of all those things which can be said or sung of the great and holy love of the Church which loves Christ and is loved by him.’³ Honorius of Autun makes the same point even more succinctly when he says simply : that everything said of the Church may

¹ PL. 11.278. O Caritas . . . tu Eva in Mariam redintegrasti, tu Adam in Christo renovasti. Cf. footnote 3, p. 233.

² *Dem. Pred. Apost.* tr. Webert, 5.

³ PL. 169.155 D. Quia nihil huic disconvenit omnium eorum quaecumque dici vel cantari possunt de magno et sancto amore dilectae et diligentis Christum ecclesiae.

be understood of the Virgin, who is the Spouse and Mother of the Bridegroom.¹ These twelfth-century authors are not the first to speak in this fashion. Already in the ninth century Paschasius Radbertus had written of Mary :

'A bride is sought so that through her now the universal Church of Christ which is to be, may be marked out for espousal, and that the genus may be resumed in the species.'² Mary is for Radbert in some way a pre-figuration of the Church Universal. His reference to her as summing up the 'genus,' the Universal Church, in herself, the 'species,' must not be understood as if these terms had the technical meaning they acquired in scholastic thinking. Paschasius' purpose in introducing them here is to set out what he considers a solid scriptural basis for his thought. The terms themselves came to him from Tyconius, who in his fourth rule for the interpretation of the Scriptures, noted that the Holy Spirit speaks of the totality for the part or vice versa.³

It is very clear from the evolution of the conception of Mary as bride of Christ that it was from a combination of the scriptural data on the Church as the bride of Christ and the idea of a certain relationship of Mary and the Church that it arose. In the case of this term the process we have seen of speaking of the Church in terms of Mary, as Virgin Mother and as Eve, is reversed.⁴

The evidence of tradition so far cited shows the usage of a common terminology to speak of Mary and the Church. Each is presented to us as Virgin Mother, Eve, Bride of Christ. We find the Church described in terms we primarily associate with Mary. We find Mary

¹ PL. 172.494. Omnia quae de ecclesia dicta sunt, possunt etiam de ipsa Virgine sponsa et Matre sponsi intelligi.

² PL. 120.103-4. Quod hic sponsa queritur ut per eam omnino jam tunc futura Christi universalis ecclesia signetur ad desponsandum et colligatur genus in specie.

³ Spicq, *Esquisse d'une histoire de l'exégèse latine au Moyen Age*. Vrin. Paris, 1944, p. 102.

⁴ A fuller development of this point is given by the present writer in thesis alluded to in footnote 4, p. 231.

described in terms we primarily associate with the Church.

When the Fathers spoke of the Church as Eve, as the Virgin Mother, they did so in the consciousness that they were referring to the Church in Marian terms. When they spoke of Mary as the bride of Christ they were aware that they were describing her in ecclesial terms, for the revealed word of God was clear to read. There is no escaping the conclusion that this mode of writing was a deliberate thing. It shows very convincingly how closely Mary and the Church were related in the thinking of these writers of the past.

If we examine our own thinking, we discover that we tend to consider some of these terms 'Eve,' 'Virgin Mother' as having an exclusively Marian reference, and others, as 'bride of Christ,' as having an exclusively ecclesial bearing. We find, in fact, that we do not tend to think in terms of Mary and the Church. We, almost instinctively, regard mariology and ecclesiology, Mary and the Church, 'in isolation' one from another. The patristic transference of terms already examined shows that the Fathers' thinking did not run thus. In fact we appear to be at opposite poles in that we naturally tend to think of Mary and the Church apart, while they naturally think of them together. We appear to have lost or to have allowed to grow obscured the rooted patristic and later conception of Mary and the Church as related, as subjects of interchangeable predication, as similar mysteries. Serlo of Savigny expressed this truth in the concise phrase: 'She (Mary) is figured in the Church and the Church in her.'¹

The usage of transferable terms or of a common terminology for two distinct things argues to a perceived similarity. It is on the basis of a certain likeness of Mary and the Church that the Fathers and later writers speak of the one in terms of the other. We have already

¹ Cited in Barre, BSFEM ix, 1951, p. 92.

observed some points of similarity which the Fathers noted based on our oneness with Christ. What we must notice now is that further evidence shows that these are not merely parallels or accidental similarities. They are seen as belonging to the divine plan of Redemption. It is fundamentally in the divine plan of God that the Church bears a likeness to Mary. Mary is the model, the perfect exemplar the Creator has established to which His Church must conform.

This idea is found in the patristic and later tradition in various guises. One way in which it is expressed is by saying that Mary is 'the type of the Church.' The expression is first used, as far as our knowledge goes, by St. Ambrose.¹ The word 'type' occurs again in an anonymous writer of the sixth century who makes a longer and more compendious parallel of Mary and the Church before concluding that Mary is the type of the Church.² Both these writers are concerned principally with Mary's virgin motherhood as the image of the motherhood of the Church. With Ambrose Autpert in the eighth century we find the typology relates to Mary's sufferings as the exemplar of the sufferings of the Church.³ An anonymous writer of the eleventh century brings out very clearly that the Church is formed after the pattern of Mary.⁴ He does not use the patristic term 'type' but he makes clear the meaning of this term. The word 'type' recurs in the twelfth century in the works of

¹ CSEL. 32.45. dicamus et mysterium. Bene desponsata sed virgo quia est ecclesiae typus quae est immaculata sed nupta. Concepit nos virgo de spiritu parit nos virgo sine gemitu.

² PL. 39.1989. Quoniam eum secundum carnem natum ex virgine disserimus nunc ea quae spiritaliter sentire possumus disseramus. Videamus ergo quae est illa virgo tam sancta ad quam Spiritus Sanctus venire dignatus est, quae tam speciosa quam Deus elegit sponsam, quae tam copiosa cujus generationem cunctus orbis excipiat quae tam casta ut possit virgo esse post partum. Nonne in figura Mariae typum videmus esse sanctae ecclesiae.

³ *Hom. in Purif. B.V.M.* MS. B. Mazarin 13, cited in de Lubac, *Splendour of the Church*, p. 206. Ipsam beatam Virginem cujus animam gladius transfodisse perhibetur typum ecclesiae pretendisse reperimus.

⁴ PL. 96.269 D. Quia ad vicem Matris ejus matris nostrae ecclesiae forma constituitur.

Honorius of Autun. Dealing with the fact that the Canticle of Canticles—a book long held by Christian tradition to speak of Christ and the Church—is read in the liturgy on Our Lady's feast-days, Honorius quite simply states that this is done because she is the type of the Church.¹ Sicard of Cremona, writing some years later on the liturgy of the feast of the Assumption, explains the borrowings from the feast of the dedication of a church which are found in the liturgy for the octave of the Assumption on the same principle.²

This series of testimonies from the western tradition shows the presence of an idea that Mary is the model or divinely constituted exemplar of the Church. The use of the word 'type' suggests very strongly that the idea of divine ordination or planning is in the writer's mind. The use of the word *figura* suggests the same thing. Both these terms were commonly used of persons, events in the old dispensation which foreshadowed or prefigured events or persons in the new. It would be a grave mistake however to conclude, as we might be tempted to do, that the word *typus* here has the definite and fixed meaning it acquired as the correlative of *antitypus*. The word *typus* did not have this fixed and certain meaning in the patristic period.³ It is necessary to interpret the word 'type' in these expressions as a wide term, expressing merely the fact that Mary is the divinely constituted exemplar of the Church. It in no way follows from the Fathers' use of this term that the Church is superior to Mary as the antitype, the reality, is to the type, its shadow. To interpret the expression in this way is to imply that the term 'typus' was already an exact

¹ PL. 172.494. Hic liber ideo legitur de festo sanctae Mariae qua ipsa gessit typum ecclesiae . . .

² PL. 213.420. Haec virginis festivitatem habet octavam in qua dicuntur quaedam quibus in ecclesiarum dedicationibus utimur. Lectiones quoque de cantico amoris, et antiphonae et responsoria, similiter assumuntur eo quia figuram tenet ecclesiae.

³ See Woolcombe, *Le sens de 'type' chez les Pères. Vie Spirituelle, Supp. 4, 1951*, pp. 84 f.

technical term in the patristic age. This was not the case.

The same idea of a similarity of Mary and the Church manifests itself in the eastern tradition though in a rather different form. Strangely enough we do not find the word *typus* used by the Greeks. This is a point of some significance. The Greek Fathers chose a rather different and at first sight rather startling method to inculcate the relationship of Mary and the Church. By-passing terms altogether, they simply referred to Mary as the Church. Thus Ephrem makes this extraordinary assertion about Christ.

‘He walked on the sea, He appeared in the cloud, He freed His Church from the law of circumcision. He made John the Virgin the leader for God in place of Josue, son of Nun, and to him he gave *Mary His Church* as Moses had given Josue the people.’¹

A writer of a somewhat earlier date, who lived in the last half of the fourth century, engaged in defending Our Lady’s virginity *post partum* pointed out to his opponent that if he insisted on saying that the brethren of the Lord mentioned in the Gospel were brothers of Our Lord, children of Mary, he must hold that after the Spirit, after Gabriel, Joseph was wed to the most chaste virgin and immaculate Church.² Again, in a sermon preached at the Council of Ephesus, an anonymous author, formerly believed to be St. Cyril of Alexandria, speaks of ‘*The ever virgin Mary, that is the Holy Church and her Son and spotless spouse.*’³

These texts from the Greek tradition certainly imply a similarity of Mary and the Church. But to say this much

¹ Ephraem cited Müller, *Maria-Ecclesia*, p. 152, n. 62. Super mare ambulavit in nube apparuit, ecclesiam suam a lege circumcisionis solvit et Joannem virginem pro Josue filio Nun ducem Dei constituit eique Mariam ecclesiam suam dedit, sicut Moyses Josue populum dederat.

² G.C.S. Hegemonius 81, 3–5 sed si tamen dixeris eum fratres habuisse sine dubio intelligendum est quia post spiritum post Gabriel nupserit Joseph Virgo castissima et immaculata ecclesia.

³ PG. 77.996 C.

and no more is an understatement for the texts do not merely imply great likeness, they posit a certain identification. To take any other view is to undervalue them. The clear message of the eastern patristic authors we have cited is that Mary is the Church. Likeness in the Greek tradition extends to identification. We do not find in these texts the distinction of figure and thing figured, of exemplar and copy, which the western tradition shows. These Greek writers emphasize that Mary and the Church are one, the Latins that they are alike as pattern and copy, as prefiguration and thing figured. These are the lines of the patristic evidence. Are they lines of convergence or divergence? Are they related? How did they originate? A new understanding of Scripture supplies a key to these problems.

We may well ask if Revelation provides any scriptural warrant for patristic thinking on Mary and the Church. Does the written word of God offer any foundation for the transference of texts from Mary to the Church, for the typological approach of the western Fathers, and for the identity-thinking of the eastern writers? It seems that an answer to this question is supplied by a recent study on the twelfth chapter of the Apocalypse.¹

The identity of the Woman clothed with the Sun is still to-day a matter of dispute among exegetes. A simple review of the text itself makes clear why tradition shows divergent interpretations, some authors holding this woman is Mary, others saying she is the Church.² To the minds of those who interpreted the Woman as the Church, the mention of birthpangs ruled out the

¹ We refer to the outstanding work of B. le Frois, S.V.D., *The Woman Clothed with the Sun. Individual or Collective* (Orbis Catholicus), Rome, 1954.

² *Apoc.* xii. And now in heaven, a great portent appeared; a woman that wore the sun for her mantle. . . . She had a child in her womb, and was crying out as she travailed in great pain of her delivery. Then a second portent appeared in heaven, a great dragon. . . . And he stood fronting the woman who was in childbirth ready to swallow up the child as soon as she bore it. She bore a son, the Son who is to herd the nations like sheep with a crook of iron.

possibility that she represented the Virgin Mother of God.¹ Similarly those who held for a Marian sense were able to point to the fact that the child the woman bore is 'the son who is to herd the nations like sheep with a crook of iron.' This can only refer to the Messias—the Word Incarnate.²

A modern work already referred to³ suggests a solution to these difficulties. Its author's conclusion is that by the Woman of *Apocalypse*, xii, St. John meant the Blessed Virgin Mary. He depicts her, however, in a very particular way. In the words of Father le Frois :

St. John, under the figure of the Woman in *Apocalypse* xii, *portrays Mary as the Church*. In his mind they are identified as a totality : an individual which impersonates a collective, and a collective which is embodied in a concrete person. It is not enough to say : the woman is Mary but portrayed as the Archetype of the Church. Nor is it enough to say : the Woman is the Church but portrayed in the features of Mary. That is not the identification the Semite has in mind. One must say : St. John under the figure of the Woman depicts Mary as the perfect realization of the Church.⁴

This somewhat startling conclusion is difficult to grasp, since a full understanding of its force necessitates a grasp of that semitic mode of thinking which may be called totality-thinking. It is not possible in a small compass to convey this idea adequately. It may basically be stated as a mode of thinking in which the individual and the collectivity are seen as identified in one totality. A representative individual for the Semite is himself and in himself somehow impersonates the collectivity to which he belongs.⁵ Because this mode of thinking, characteristically semitic, is far removed from our processes of

¹ Fr. le Frois, op. cit., pp. 211 f, holds that this is not in fact an insurmountable objection to a Marian sense.

² See le Frois, op. cit., p. 204. Cf. *Apoc.*, xix, 13-16. The name by which he is called is the Word of God . . . from his mouth issues a sharp sword with which to smite the nations and he will rule them with a rod of iron.

³ See footnote 1, p. 241.

⁴ le Frois, op. cit., p. 262.

⁵ The reader must be referred again to Father le Frois for an adequate study of this point.

abstraction and personification, it is very difficult to grasp. It is also very difficult to state since we lack the terminology.

Mary, then, in *Apocalypse xii* is and represents the Church. She is the representative individual in whom the collectivity is impersonated. In this semitic totality conception the two lines of our traditional evidence east and west appear to coalesce.

Between the eastern and western writers we have examined, there appears to be a difference of emphasis. The eastern writers state the fact that Mary is the Church, emphasizing the oneness aspect of the semitic totality conception of St. John. The westerns on the other hand, speaking of Mary as the type of the Church, bring out a different aspect of the Johannine conception, that it is a typical or representative individual who impersonates the totality. The full thought of St. John does not appear to have survived its transfer to Greek and Latin moulds. The patristic evidence indicates a certain fragmentation. Thus the idea of a relationship of Mary and the Church appears grounded in tradition and ultimately in the written word of God.

To speak of Mary as the prefiguration of the Church calls for some clarification of the sense of the word 'Church' here. Do we mean that Mary prefigures the Church as a hierarchical society effecting by the power of Christ the redemption of mankind? We obviously do not. The Church in so far as she is redeeming, offering sacrifice, binding and loosing does so in the name and in the person of Christ. She carries on Christ's own mission as the bearer of redemption to men. In this work, in this aspect, she is prefigured in Christ Himself.

There is, however, another aspect of the Church, that in which she is the receiver of redemption—the order of grace, the interior aspect of the Church. It is in this aspect as the object of redemption that she is prefigured in Mary. This is the true sense of the feminine symbolism

of the Woman—the receptivity of the creature before God.

The Church can study her own life in the life of Mary. She can see herself in Mary receiving the Word of truth through God's intermediary. She can see the perfect pattern of her response in the Virgin who said : ' Behold the handmaid of the Lord.' In the sorrowful hour of the Passion she can see her model, Mary, in the endurance of her Compassion, suffering in her heart, as the Church must suffer in the hearts of her members till the end of the world. In the glorification of Mary in her bodily assumption, she can see the promise, the very pattern of her own ultimate glorification.

The mysteries of Mary's life are our mysteries. They reveal the pattern of our salvation in the Church whose exemplar Mary is, for the Church is here in the words of St. Jerome no other thing than those souls who believe in Christ.¹

The theology of Mary and the Church in spite of the huge number of writings on the subject in recent years is as yet in an unformed state. A glance at the programme of the International Mariological Congress held last month in Lourdes on this theme serves to confirm this view.² This programme outlines in many searching questions the topics to be discussed. It holds out the promise of a mighty enrichment of Marian doctrine, especially as regards the scriptural basis of mariology. The publication of its proceedings will be eagerly awaited.

It is not without significance that this 'Age of Mary' is also the 'Age of the Church.' The unprecedented development of Marian doctrine of the last fifty years is paralleled by an equally remarkable theological 're-discovery' of the Church. These two full-flowing streams

¹ *Tract de Ps. 86. Anec. Maredsol. 3.2.104, 23-105.25. Ecclesia Christi non est alia nisi animae credentium in Christo.*

² See *Nuntia Periodica* i, Acad. Mar. Internat., Romae, 1957.

meet in the theology of Mary and the Church. An isolated mariology is no longer possible. Neither is an isolated ecclesiology. Development of doctrine on the Church seems destined to advance hand in hand with doctrinal development on Mary.

READING LIST

In addition to the proceedings of the Lourdes Congress, 1958, already alluded to, which will undoubtedly be a mine of information, the following works are of interest. To keep the list within bounds, only works in English are listed.

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